

SOME BIRDS OF URUGUAY PARASITIZED BY  
ORNITHOCTONA ERYTHROCEPHALA  
(DIPTERA, HIPPOBOSCIDAE)

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In *The Hippoboscidae or Louse-Flies of Mammals and Birds* (Entomologica Americana, 1954 and 1956) Dr. Joseph C. Bequaert includes Uruguay within the range of *Ornithoctona erythrocephala* with records of only three specimens as follows: one specimen as a parasite on *Columba picazuro* from Laguna Mirim and two specimens on *Buteo magnirostris gularis* from Rocha and Montevideo.

In this article are considered some birds of Uruguay whose skins are in my personal collection and from which louse-flies were collected or observed by the author. The parasitized birds were obtained within an area of about 15,000 square kilometers in eastern Uruguay near the Brazilian boundary and on the Atlantic coast. There, highlands are scarce; a great number of large lagoons are surrounded by grassy lowlands and marshes. The climate is temperate and with high humidity.

In the following list of hosts and parasites, wherever the collector's name is omitted the specimen may be assumed to have been collected by the author. For scientific and common English names of birds, *Catalogue of Birds of the Americas and Adjacent Islands* by Hellmayr and Conover (Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool., XIII, Pt. 1, N. 4, 1949) was used.

*Buteo magnirostris pucherani* (= *B. m. gularis*), Pucheran's Large Billed Hawk. Gavilán Bobo.—On September 23, 1953, one adult female was procured in Coronilla (Departamento de Rocha, Km. 315, No. 9 Road). On this bird were found two specimens of *O. erythrocephala*. These flies were given by the author to Luis P. Barattini's Collection of Diptera (Montevideo) and were seen by Dr. J. C. Bequaert who has reported them in the reference cited above. His citation of Montevideo as the collection locality for one of the specimens is in error.

On September 24, 1953, one adult male bird was killed at Km. 195 of No. 13 Road near Cerro do los Potros (Departamento de Maldonado). In this instance another specimen of the louse-fly was taken. This parasite and the following one identified by the author were sent as a gift to the U. S. National Museum (Smithsonian Institution) where the identification was checked by Dr. Stone.

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On February 9, 1954, one young female was shot on the eastern slope of Punta Ballena (Departamento de Maldonado). Another fly was caught on this bird.

All of the birds were skinned immediately after death and the parasites were seen on base of thighs, uropygium, rump and anal region. They moved swiftly among the feathers finally assuming a position with the dorsal surface against the skin of the bird and grasping very strongly the shafts and barbs of the feathers with their limbs.

*Buteo fuscescens fuscescens* (= *B. melanoleucus melanoleucus*), Buzzard Eagle. *Aguila* Gris.—On August 14, 1954, Roberto Peñagaricano sent me an adult male bird from Sierra de Otazo (Departamento de Treinta y Tres). When I opened the shipping box I found a specimen of *O. erythrocephala* on the upper wing coverts.

Two other specimens of *O. erythrocephala* were collected by the author on a subadult male of this hawk collected by Mr. Peñagaricano in the same locality on April 15, 1955. These flies left the body of the host, flying in the room where I was working. Their flight was jerky, straight and quick. Both flies alighted on the curtain of a window grasping tenaciously to the cloth.

*Otus choliba choliba*, Cholibá Screech Owl. Coruja o Lechucita.—On July 16, 1955 an adult female was shot in Pinares de Portezuelo, near Laguna del Sauce (Departamento de Maldonado, Km. 128, No. 9 Road). Having put this little owl near me in my car, I saw, after a time, on the external surface of the plumage of the owl's head a louse-fly with the conspicuous red eyes and dull greenish abdomen of *O. erythrocephala*. It flashed away at high speed through the window of my car.

*Circus cyaneus cinereus*, Cinereus Harrier. Gavilan Ceniciento.—Enrique Gomez Haedo sent me one juvenile male harrier on May 18, 1957, from marshes near Laguna Negra (Departamento de Rocha). From the surface of the bird's head I obtained another fly.

**Remarks.**—According to the facts mentioned above it seems that *Ornithoctona erythrocephala* can be considered to be endemic in Uruguay because it has been collected all the year round on native birds. Punta Ballena (Departamento de Maldonado) at 35 degrees south latitude is the southernmost locality recorded for the parasite on the eastern coast of South America.

I express my gratefulness to Dr. Alan Stone (U. S. National Museum) who has checked the identifications for me. I am also indebted to Dr. George S. Tulloch (Brooklyn Entomological Society) and Dr. Maurice T. James (State College of Washington) who courteously put me in touch with Dr. Stone.